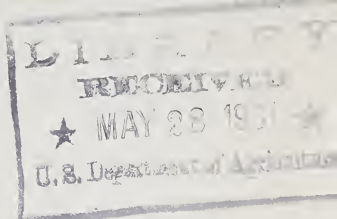


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Garden Notes

Number Fifteen



The Peony

The Flower for the Great Northwest



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Van Wert, Ohio

I like to see fine Peonies, I like to grow fine Peonies, I like to talk about fine Peonies, I like to write about fine Peonies, and I am willing even to go to the expense of publishing what I write, with the hope that my enthusiasm may influence others to grow these most glorious flowers in communities where they are not now known.

The Peony, more than any other flower, is particularly adaptable to our great Northwest and, as I am now on the train returning from a visit of nearly a week in the Peony enthusiastic city of Duluth, the most of this booklet will be devoted to a record of my observations on the Peony as I found it growing in that part of the United States.

But first, I wish to tell you that my Peony season this year has extended over more than a full three months' period. Impossible, do you say? No, it is the literal truth. My Peony season this year might possibly be said to have begun the last week in March, when in San Francisco I found in the florist shops, very, very fine Tree Peony blooms. But my Peony season really began in earnest when, on April twelfth in Mrs. Francis McCullagh's garden I found Lemoine's hybrids *Le Printemps* and *Mai fleuri* in bloom. About a week later, on April twenty-first,

Judge Berry and *White Lady*, two of our best herbaceous Peonies, were in full bloom in that same garden, and were soon followed by *Jubilee* and other prize-winning varieties. We have often heard it said that Peonies will not grow in California, but anyone who visits Mrs. McCullagh's garden in Los Gatos, which is less than fifty miles from San Francisco, will be convinced of the absolute falsity of that statement. Mrs. McCullagh is not simply growing Peonies, but she is growing the very finest varieties, and growing them as well as they can be grown anywhere. Notwithstanding California is a land of flowers, experienced California florists have stated, that *Jubilee* blooms, such as grown in Mrs. McCullagh's garden, would find very ready sale at high prices in San Francisco. Of course, Mrs. McCullagh does not sell her blooms, for she grows them for exactly the same kind of pleasure that you and I get out of the blooms which grow in our gardens.

On one of my visits to a local California Peony garden I was delighted to find the owner to be Mr. Karl Rosenfield, a son of J. H. Rosenfield, and the son for whom the best Rosenfield Peony was named. I saw the variety *Therese* growing in Mr. Rosenfield's garden with as much vigor as I have ever seen it growing in any Eastern garden, and so I do not hesitate to tell any of my readers that if they wish to undertake to grow Peonies in California they can probably secure practical advice from both Mrs. McCullagh and Mr. Rosenfield.

After my return to my own garden I had the pleasure of having the Peony blooming season begin all over again, and I was much interested in seeing the blooms on several of the early blooming species, which I have purchased, not so much for the beauty of their bloom, as for my own Peony education. Of all the species *Tenuifolia flore plena*, with its moss-like foliage and its double scarlet blooms, interests me most. Another very valuable variety I have purchased under the name *Anomala*, and again under the name *Anomala Smouthii*, and I believe that both it and *Tenuifolia flore plena* should be placed upon the market, and I intend to propagate stock for that purpose within the next two or three years.

The very cold weather in late May which destroyed the bloom in my "European Iris Garden," damaged also the buds in my Peony garden to such an extent that a great quantity of the bloom did not open at all, and the blooms which opened were

usually not more than two-thirds the normal size. Of course, this was a disappointment, but as it is the first time it has happened in ten years, it has not discouraged me in the least from continuing my efforts to have perfect bloom in future years.

My secretary, Mr. Shimer, another of my younger employees, Mr. Pennell, and I took a great quantity of our bloom to the Des Moines Peony Show, and we were successful in getting a first prize for the best display of twenty blooms of white Peonies with *Le Cygne*, and we received also, first prize for the best display of single Peonies, as well as the only prize which was given for new varieties originated since 1905. The show was a very successful one, and one of my Garden Notes, Number Sixteen, gives my impressions of it. That Garden Note, like the one you are now reading, is for free distribution and will be sent to you upon request.

The main thing, however, which I wish to tell you about at this time is the wonderful Peonies in our Northwestern States, and my observation at close range of the interest which is being manifested in planting new Peony gardens in that part of our country. Ever since I have been selling Peonies, I have had some very enthusiastic customers in Duluth, one of them, O. S. Andresen, with so much interest that he placed his orders for Peonies with me by telegraph, and his enthusiasm for the success of the Peony in Duluth has been contagious—so much so in fact, that I have been led to share in it.

About a year ago another of my Duluth friends, E. L. Kimball, told me that the leading newspaper of their city, The Duluth Herald, had decided to offer \$375.00 in prizes—not for blooms at the Peony Show, but for Peony gardens in the city, and he, as president of The Horticultural Society, finally induced me to act as the judge in their Peony garden contest, and allowed me to select Mr. Harry F. Little, the main prize-winner at the Des Moines Peony Show, to assist me in awarding the prizes.

The determination of this enterprising newspaper publisher, Mr. Hanson, to put his good money back of the Peony interest in his community, is founded upon the belief that Duluth can be made the "Peony City" of the United States just as Portland, Oregon, is known as the "City of Roses." Whether or not Duluth ever attains the enviable position of being known as "The City of Peonies" depends solely upon the efforts of its own citizens. No other city, however, this side of the Great Lakes,

has such a favorable climate for growing the very best and finest Peonies. Nowhere have I found the slopes of the hills and valleys so favorable for an extremely long season, and no soil can be found anywhere on earth which will produce finer, more perfect blooms than we found growing in Judge Cutting's garden.

Upon our arrival we found that everyone gave to Judge Cutting the credit and honor for being the first, the original Peony fan in the city, and we found also that his enthusiasm had led the First National Bank to begin sponsoring local Peony shows in their magnificent building, seven or eight years ago. This interest the officers of the Bank have continually maintained, and the Shows of the Peony Society have grown better each year, until some of the exhibitors are now able to stage such an exhibit as would do them credit at a National Show of the American Peony Society. So you can see that the conditions for a Peony Garden Contest were most favorable, for Peonies have been planted in a larger percentage of Duluth gardens than anywhere else I know.

We found about thirty gardens enrolled in the contest, for there was a one hundred dollar prize for the best Peony garden on a lot fifty feet wide or less, with a second and third prize of fifty and twenty-five dollars each. There was a prize of one hundred dollars for the best Peony garden on a lot one hundred feet frontage or less, and also another one hundred dollar prize for the best Peony garden on a lot with more than one hundred feet frontage. An automobile was furnished us and with Mr. McBride, one of the assistant editors, we spent several days visiting over thirty gardens, everyone of which we enjoyed, and the owners of which seemed glad to see us and manifested their interest in the future of the Peony in their city. A picture taken in each of the three gardens which were awarded first prizes is included in this booklet, but the thing which we want other Peony lovers to know is, that the campaign to induce enough enthusiasm to adopt the Peony as the city flower, has been producing results.

The Peonies planted in Duluth have been given the choicest locations in the garden, being often planted in front, so that the passers by may enjoy their beauty. Peonies have received cultivation and have not been allowed to struggle with grass and weeds. Weak-stemmed varieties have been given supports so that the blooms were not allowed to lie upon the ground, and it



FIRST PRIZE PEONY GARDEN

On 50-foot lot at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John M. Kleitsch

pleased us to find that in many cases, the supports were invisible. Although many varieties have been planted without labels, yet the gardeners are now anxious to have their varieties identified and I believe only named varieties will in the future be planted. The landscape possibilities of the Peony are beginning to be realized, for if properly taken care of, Peony plants are beautiful before the blooming season; they have the most striking beauty of any plant through the blooming season, and after the last petals have fallen they can be trimmed to a beautiful form, which they will retain till winter comes.

The city of Duluth, having a cool equitable summer temperature, is especially favorable for Peony growing, as the very, very late varieties have an excellent chance to fully open their blooms. It is quite probable that many extremely late varieties like *Loveliness*, *Galathee*, *Supreme*, *Adelaide Hollis*, and *Coquette* (Lemoine) will have a higher rating after they have been grown in a climate like that of Duluth.

Mr. Little and I believe that the interest in Peonies will grow. We were particularly pleased to see that the owners of some of the gardens entered in the contest have begun to realize the landscape possibilities of Peonies, and we believe that the donor of the prizes for Peony gardens wishes to increase the landscape spirit among the citizens.



FIRST PRIZE PEONY GARDEN

On 100-foot lot at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Matter

Of course, the winners of the hundred dollar prizes were delighted not only with the money value of their prizes, but even more with the fact that their gardens deserved to win the prizes awarded them. However, at least two of the winners of these prizes told me, that they would have been glad to have seen more prizes awarded, and that their interest would have been as great, even if the money had been very much smaller, and as the donor of the prizes particularly asked us to make recommendations as to the allotment of future prizes, we will recommend that the same amount of money be distributed among a larger number of contestants.

We were delighted with the climate of Duluth, we were delighted with the hospitality of its citizens and with the interest which they manifested in our favorite flower. We believe that still more interest can be aroused over the Peony, and if Duluth really wishes to get the name of being "The Peony City" of the United States, it would be a very good plan to have the owner of each hotel place enough Peony blooms in cold storage, so that he could place named Peony blooms upon his tables throughout the entire season. Duluth, having such a delightful climate during July, August and September, will naturally be the resort of more and more people of leisure, during those months, and if



FIRST PRIZE PEONY GARDEN

On Lot With More Than 100 Feet Frontage at the Home of
Mrs. D. W. Stocking

every visitor to the city should find named Peony blooms upon his table every day of his visit, he could not help speaking of it upon his return to his own town. I am sure also that many men and women who love Peonies would select Duluth in which to spend at least a part of their vacations in order to see the much-talked-of Peonies.

Peonies are very easily kept in storage, for I am told that Peonies which are cut at the proper stage of their blooming period in June, not only can be successfully kept in cold storage until September, but that this is now being done on a very large commercial scale, and that it is a successful financial enterprise. So it should be easy for the enterprising Duluth Peony enthusiasts to have their magnificent bloom displayed throughout the entire season, and I know of nothing which would excite more comment than beautiful Peony blooms, prominently displayed so long after the Peony season is past. Nowhere on earth can more beautiful Peonies be grown than in Duluth, for some of the varieties, like *Sarah Bernhardt*, *James Kelway*, *Marie Jacquin*, *Tourangelle*, *Madame Emile Lemoine*, and *Octavie Demay* were so large and so beautiful that the judges could scarcely recognize them.

I trust that this appreciation of Duluth's efforts will encourage

still more of its citizens to plant Peony gardens, and we suggest that all varieties be selected with a view to their landscape possibilities, and that every variety be correctly and prominently labeled. Some Peonies, like *Jubilee*, *Eugenie Verdier*, *Kelway's Glorious*, *Pasteur* and *Therese*, have made a wonderful record for winning prizes at Peony Shows and they are called "Show Peonies," but all of them have stems which are not strong enough to hold up their blooms without support. Consequently, these and similar varieties should be planted in a cutting garden which does not form an important part of the landscape planting and blooms may, and should be cut from them for the pleasure of the owner and his friends. Other varieties like *Eugene Verdier*, *E. G. Hill*, *Tamatbako*, *Cherry Hill*, *Madame Emile Lemoine*, *Enchanteresse*, *Galathee* and *Dr. H. Barnsby* have strong, stiff stems and should be included in the landscape planting, and blooms from them should not be cut until they have lost their beauty, for each individual bloom has its part to play in forming the picture which the lover of landscape beauty so much admires. The selection of the proper varieties for landscape planting should be given careful attention by Duluth citizens who wish to enter future garden contests, and the location in which these selected varieties are planted should receive equal consideration.

I am sure that all reliable growers will be glad to give assistance to any individual in order that he may select the right varieties, and we want to congratulate in advance the men who may next year be selected to perform the task of judging in the garden contest, for both Mr. Little and I regard the week spent in Duluth as one of the happiest and most profitable of the year.

LEE R. BONNEWITZ.

Van Wert, Ohio, July 15, 1924.